

Message Text

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 01 BUENOS 01881 142111Z
ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-10
L-03 NSAE-00 PA-02 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 TRSE-00
MCT-01 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /060 W
-----107559 142119Z /73

O R 142036Z MAR 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4919
AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
AMEMBASSY BRASILIA
AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO
AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

UNCLAS BUENOS AIRES 1881

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, AR
SUBJECT: RIOTING AT VILLA DEVOTO PRISON

1. RIOTING BROKE OUT THIS MORNING AT
VILLA DEVOTO PRISON IN BUENOS AIRES.
ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES THE DISTURBANCES
BEGAN AT ABOUT 0820 WHEN A NUMBER OF REGULAR
CRIMINAL PRISONERS--AS OPPOSED TO PERSONS
ACCUSED OF SUBVERSION OR OTHER ILLEGAL
POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, ACCORDING TO OFFICIAL
SOURCES--STARTED FIRES IN ONE CELL BLOCK
(PAVILION SEVEN OF CELL BLOCK 2). THE
DISTURBANCE WAS QUELLED BY ABOUT 1100 AND
FIRES EXTINGUISHED.

2. AS OF 1500 MARCH 14, 70 PERSONS
HAD DIED OF ASPHYXIATION AND BURNS AND
30 MORE ARE CRITICALLY INJURED. THERE
WERE 161 PERSONS LODGED IN THE CELL BLOCK
AFFECTED. OFFICIAL SOURCES DESCRIBE PERSONS TAKING PART
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BUENOS 01881 142111Z

AS MOSTLY YOUNG MALE "COMMON CRIMINALS".

3. DEVOTO'S PRISONER POPULATION IS ABOUT 3,000,
ACCORDING TO POLICE SOURCES, OF WHOM 614 ARE "FEMALE
TERRORISTS". THE REMAINDER ARE DESCRIBED AS COMMON
CRIMINALS. (EMBASSY COMMENT: ON FEBRUARY 4 THE
GOVERNMENT ISSUED A STATEMENT LISTING 702 PERSONS

DETAINED AT DEVOTO UNDER "PODER EJECUTIVO NACIONAL"--
27 OF THIS NUMBER MALES. THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PRISONERS
INTERNEED FOR SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES IS PROBABLY GREATER,
SINCE PERSONS ALREADY CONVICTED OR UNDER JUDICIAL
PROCESS WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN LISTED AMONG PEN DETAINEES.)

4. THERE FOLLOWS BELOW THE FULL TEXT OF GOA'S COMMUNIQUE
NUMBER 1 REGARDING THE INCIDENT:

"ON TODAY'S DATE, AT 8:10 AM, WHEN AN INSPECTION
WAS CARRIED OUT IN WARD NO. 7 OF THE DETENTION INSTITUTE
OF BUENOS AIRES CITY, WHERE PRISONERS DETAINED BECAUSE
OF COMMON CRIME ARE LODGED, THE LATTER
TRIED TO TAKE JAIL WARDENS BY SURPRISE, ATTACKING THEM
WITH DIFFERENT WEAPONS.

"AS THEY COULD NOT SUCCEED, THE PRISONERS
PUSHED BEDS AGAINST THE ENTRANCE TO THE WARD AND SET
FIRE TO THE MATTRESSES. THIS GAVE WAY TO A FIRE THAT
ENCOMPASSED PRACTICALLY THE WHOLE OF THE WARD OF 161
PRISONERS. WHEN THE FIRE WAS PUT OUT IT WAS POSSIBLE
TO ENTER THE WARD AND IT WAS FOUND THAT THERE WERE DEAD
AND INJURED AMONG THE DETAINEES; A LIST WILL BE MADE
AVAILABLE SHORTLY.

" DUE TO THE ABOVE MENTIONED CIRCUMSTANCES
UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 BUENOS 01881 142111Z

H.E. THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF THE NATION, BRIDAGIER
AUDITOR JULIO ARNALDO GOMEZ, THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF
THE FEDERAL PENITENTIARY SERVICE, COL. JORGE ANTONIO
DOTTI, AND TOP AUTHORITIES OF THE INSTITUTION ARRIVED
TO THE JAIL, AND TOGETHER WITH FEDERAL JUDGE DR. GUILLERMO
RIVAROLA WERE ABLE TO ASCERTAIN THAT THE DEAD AND
WOUNDED DID NOT SHOW ANY BULLET WOUNDS, AND THAT
THEY HAD BEEN DAMAGED BY BURNS AND ASPHYXIA. ALSO IT
IS TO BE CLEARLY STATED THAT NONE OF THE DETAINEES AT
THE DISPOSAL OF THE EXECUTIVE POWER HAD ANY PARTICIPATION
IN THE ABOVE."

5. IN CONTRAST AP, UP AND AFP STATED IN THEIR REPORTS
THAT A NUMBER OF PRISONERS WERE SHOT, AND ALSO REPORTED
THAT A CERTAIN NUMBER OF PRISONERS HAD WEAPONS AND KILLED
A GUARD. THE SAME NEWS AGENCIES ALSO REPORTED THAT
SIGNAL FOR THE UPRISING WAS APPARENTLY GIVEN WHEN TWO
CARS DROVE PAST THE PRISON AND OPENED FIRE.

6. ACTION REQUEST: ASSOCIATED PRESS CONTACTS AT NOON
3/14 TOLD US THEY HAD BEEN TELEXED A TWO-LINE ADVANCE
OF A STORY TO BE ISSUED LATER TODAY STATING THAT STATE

DEPARTMENT SOURCES WERE REPORTED TO HAVE SAID THERE
HAD BEEN ANTICIPATION IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR SOME TIME
OF PRISON RIOTS IN ARGENTINA. REQUEST ANY BACKGROUND
THAT CAN BE GIVEN US ON THIS.
CASTRO

UNCLASSIFIED

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CIVIL DISORDERS, PENAL INSTITUTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 14 mar 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BUENOS01881
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780113-1146
Format: TEL
From: BUENOS AIRES
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780373/aaaacjv.tel
Line Count: 121
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: d3f5f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION ARA
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3345220
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RIOTING AT VILLA DEVOTO PRISON
TAGS: SHUM, PINS, PINT, PORS, AR
To: STATE ASUNCION
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/d3f5f5c7-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014